

## **Seattle Waterfront Partners Group**

### **Meeting**

September 9, 2005

#### **Attendees**

##### **Waterfront Partners Group**

Tom Eanes	Seattle Planning Commission
Lorna Jordan	Lorna Jordan Studio
Bea Kumasaka	Belltown Neighborhood
Tim King	WA State Ferries/Colman Dock
Melinda Miller	Port of Seattle
Mark Miller	Waterfront Landing Condominiums
Ralph Pease	Argosy Cruises
David Spiker	Seattle Design Commission
Catherine Stanford	Downtown District Council
Barbara Swift	Swift & Co Landscape Architects
Jo Thompson	Pioneer Square Neighborhood
Carol Tobin	Historic Preservation Community
Heather Trim	People for Puget Sound
David Yeaworth	Allied Arts of Seattle

#### **Guests**

Annie Breckenfeld	People for Puget Sound
Joe Follansbee	Association of King County Historical Organizations
Amy Grotefendt	EnviroIssues
Jim Cade	LMN Architects
Jill Sterrett	EDAW, Inc
Janet Stephenson	EDAW, Inc
Meriwether Wilson	University of Washington
Karen Klett	Association of King County Historical Organizations

#### **Staff**

Amanda Allen	DOF
Paul Chasan	DPD – CityDesign
Layne Cubell	DPD - CityDesign/Design Commission
Richard Gelb	OSE
Steve Moddemeyer	DPD - Planning Division
Steve Pearce	SDOT
John Rahaim	DPD
Guillermo Romano	DPD - CityDesign
Robert Scully	DPD - CityDesign
Kevin Stoops	DPR
Ann Sutphin	SDOT

## **Introductions**

### **Review Meeting Minutes from August 5**

#### **Allied Arts Design Collaborative**

*David Yeaworth, Meriwether Wilson and David Spiker briefed WPG members on the outcomes of the Allied Arts Design Collaborative and how these may relate to the waterfront concept plan. The presentation was followed by discussion and questions*

### ***Intorduction***

- Waterfront was divided into 6 districts
- Assumed the tunnel alternative
- Ensured that designs met stated goals of the project
- Explored opportunities / changes that that hadn't been addressed during earlier charettes (e.g. tunnel portals)

### ***Broad Changes***

- Remove ST car onto Western/First Couplet
- Install water trolley system
- Maximize promenade, minimize traffic
- Create stormwater treatment facilities

### ***District 1: Belltown***

- Railroad crossing is a significant barrier
- Proposed structures built over the train tracks with pedestrian overpasses integrated into them
- Where buildings can't be built over the tracks, a green wall screens the train
- The spacing of structures and green walls will create a string of plazas along the tracks, plazas to be activated by activities inside buildings that span the tracks.

### ***District 2: North Portal***

- Extend the lid at Victor Steinbrueck Park to the tunnel's north portal
- Have tunnel go under Elliott and Western Aves instead of over them to make for a more gentle topography on the surface

### ***District 4: Central Area***

- Put park on piers over the water (Involves reconfiguring piers 56 & 57)
- Build 1000 housing units along edge to activate park
- Run a salmon channel / swim-way between piers and the water
- Piers are not angled, but are lined up with the street grid to maximize view corridors along downtown streets.

### ***District 5: Colman Dock (Presented by Meriwether Wilson)***

- "Island Concept", Ferry floating into and out of a dynamic place
- 3 buildings will bring economic development, and future activities to the open space
- Views from the street go through the terminal buildings
- Terminal features 1000 cars on two subterranean levels inside island structure
- Due to comparatively low bathymetry, structure can be built as with fill or as a giant pier structure
- Columbia St. to be pedestrian only, with the water features that start at City Hall continuing down the hill in the right-of-way in water features that both reveal the stormwater.
- The goal: Bring the city to the water
- Alaskan Way swimway
  - 100' wide

- walkway along swimway
- living bridges

***District 6: Pioneer Square (Presented by David Spiker)***

- Looked to other predicaments around the world to see how other places have dealt with: Industry, history, openness shipping etc...
- Water Front Cove Concept
- Remove Pier 48 (Add to Ferry Terminal)
- Pedestrian Pier extends along Main Street
- Repetitive design element along main street continue through pedestrian pier
- All streets connect to water
- Development on north edge of Terminal 46
  - celebrates the working waterfront
  - Pavilion on north edge of T-46 is a Fire station or Interpretive Center
- Flexible space: amphitheatre at foot of Railroad Way changes with the seasons
  - Wading pool in the summer
  - Wading pool can be drained for concerts
  - Ice skating in the Winter
  - Offshore barge can host summer concerts, and plays in the park.
  - Barge can be rotated to take advantage of flexible park space seating configurations

***Allied Arts Design Collaborative Questions & Comments***

**Comment:** Most contentious comments were from Historic Preservation Advocates especially regarding how historic elements of Colman Dock were addressed in the new design and whether or not the piers should be reconfigured

**Question:** How should ideas be released to the public given the looming vote on I-912?

**Answer:** People felt ideas should be released slowly given the testy political climate surrounding the election, and the public's current low frustration tolerance with big expensive public works projects in general, it would be best to move release the ideas slowly and cautiously.

**Comment:** People were concerned with the public's perception of a splintered planning process along the waterfront. AA's process can inform the city's process and nudge it into making more daring design choices, but the city sees it as separate and it is not the official waterfront plan. Both groups should educate express to the public on the nature of these processes and the relationship between them.

**Colman Dock Ferry Terminal**

*Tim King (Washington State Ferries) briefed the WPG on the current status of planning for the Colman Dock Ferry Terminal redevelopment. Questions and Discussion followed.*

- WS Ferries are currently working through design issues. They are still in a programming phase and thus the images shown are NOT final design explorations. They are exploratory concepts.
- Project represents a culture shift for WS Ferries in that they hope to develop a public private partnership.
- Development concept will likely necessitate code changes as well changes to the city's General Plan
- There has and will continue to be a lot of public process.
- *Issue:* Cars pay a large chunk of the fare box revenue. Under the current financial model set by the state legislature, the ferry system is dependent on auto traffic to offset operating costs
- *Issue:* Existing buildings sit on old pilings that are not necessarily seismically sufficient
- *Issue:* Transportation backups on Royal Brougham
- WS Ferries is considering building a holding area, possibly a parking structure. Lots of issues:
  - Customers don't like
  - Fuel costs and labor costs
  - Environmental costs (cars idling)
  - Don't want to sever Pioneer Square from Waterfront
- Plan will include some pedestrian bridge:
  - Need one bridge to avoid seas of pedestrians snarling traffic on AK Way
  - Transit connection will be on Western Ave, not AK Way
- Looking at additional transportation management strategies
  - Shift modes
  - Reservations
  - Reduce peak demand via pricing (already does this)
  - Improve on-dock operations
  - Exit metering lights as cars leave terminal similar to a metered freeway onramp
  - Change performance metrics (Currently required to recoup 80% of revenue at the fare box. Thus, dependence on car trips. Changing the formula would require action from the state legislature)
- Co-development with private sector can help fund public amenities on terminal (Lots of interest on the part of WS Ferries)
- WS Ferries is attempting a LEED Silver building

Two Alternatives Being Considered:

**Alternative 1: Lower End:**

- This alternative is basically a bigger version of what is there. It includes:
- More holding area for cars
- Similar retail as what is there today

*Alt 1 Challenges*

- More parking
- Few amenities
- Is basically another parking lot on a pier

## **Alternative 2: Harbor Focus**

- Open spaces
- Hotel use
- Housing
- Concourse
- Parking is screened
- Swim way for the salmon
- Habitat / beach in Pier 48 footprint
- Green roofs / open space shield parking

### *Alt 2 Issues*

- Impact on views:
  - Washington St: View extends to water
  - Yesler Way: View blocked by terminal concourse
  - Columbia St: View blocked by terminal concourse
  - Marion St: View blocked by terminal concourse
  - Madison St: View extends to water

Note: concourse roof will not be higher than existing viaduct thus views on streets like Yesler will be at least similar to how they are today. I.E. you will see water from up the hill.

- Massing of buildings especially tall, iconic hotel (new housing is built to scale of Pioneer Square)
- Green roofs are as of yet un-programmed spaces (WS Ferries are open to ideas on this)

### **Next Steps**

- Continue partnership with the City of Seattle
- Public outreach
- EIS process going forward
- 2009

### *Colman Dock Questions & Comments*

**Comment:** Someone said in favor of the swimway for salmon

**Question:** Why was transit not mentioned in the presentation, WS Ferries should show transit system in their images.

**Answer:** Yesler Way is an important link as it is flat & there is a lot of transit there already

- Metro wants passengers to go to Western Ave. via a pedestrian bridge to move ferry customers into the downtown core.
- There is interest in developing van pools and other alternative forms of transit

**Comment:** Programming is going to be a key component to the success of the space

**Question:** What if tunnel doesn't happen?

**Answer:** Tunnel is in graphics,

- Tunnel is ideal from perspective of WS Ferries,
- The aerial alternative would be worse for Colman Dock redevelopment, and
- Impacts of a surface street are unknown at this point but they are not necessarily fatally flawed.

**Question:** What are the City's issues?

**Answer (John Rahaim):** The city has a mix of issues. These include:

- The height and bulk of the terminal buildings
- Privatization of public space
- Legal issues

John Rahaim commented that he is beginning to hear a lot of people starting to question the privatization of public space along the waterfront. He called upon the WPG to discuss the issue with the public.

**Question:** Is there a way to quantify public benefits in order to justify the privatization of public space? Can WS Ferries diagrams show that better?

**Answer:** WA Ferries can show cost and area (square footage) of public benefits

**Question:** John Rahaim mentioned that the Colman Dock renovation has the potential to set precedent for how the City treats future redevelopment of waterfront piers. What does WS Ferries proposal mean for the future of the Waterfront?

**Comment:** Some types of private development have more public benefit than other types. Bell Street pier went through some similar issues (Privatization of public space vs. public benefits, choosing appropriate private uses etc...) and could serve as a good model.

## **Subcommittees & other news**

On September 19<sup>th</sup> John Rahaim and Guillermo Romano will brief City Council on the status of the waterfront plan.

Due to time limitations there was not enough time on the schedule for a subcommittee update. It is up to WPG members to meet with them.

The City has an ecology team who are currently prepping their own recommendations for the waterfront. These will be incorporated into the city's official waterfront plan.

*After the meeting Ralph Pease of Argosy Cruises sent the following comments to DPD. He asked that these be shared with the WPG.*

Ralph Pease  
Argosy Cruises

John Rahaim,  
Chair - Waterfront Partners Group

At last Friday's Waterfront Partners meeting the question was asked by Kevin Stoops about Argosy's reaction to the Allied Arts Collaborative presentation, specifically the central waterfront portion by David Spiker's team. My response was not exactly specific mainly because it seemed complicated at the time but in retrospect I regret not taking the opportunity to air some of the concerns and needs that Argosy has regarding a new waterfront. As I will be out of town for the next Waterfront Partners meeting in October and in the interest of time, I hope that the following can be distributed as sort of an addendum to the minutes of the meeting on 9/9/05.

Argosy Cruises likes its Central Waterfront location mid-way between Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market. We're not too far north to be exposed to the severe winter weather and waves nor too far south to conflict with the ferries and the big ships. There is a good level of congestion, and a decent number of businesses and activities to draw locals and tourists both day and night. As the Spring Street Watertaxi Co., then Seattle Harbor Tours and now Argosy Cruises we've continuously operated from the same location for 55 years and are heavily invested in the areas of marketing, infrastructure and recent Homeland Security requirements. Moving would be very costly to us.

We like our Piers but we are not Pier owners. We have good long term leases with Pier 54, 55, 56 & 57 that we've worked hard to establish and are worth a lot to us. We have our main office, Visitor Center, maintenance shop, and prep kitchen located in the piers. But our boats don't actually tie to them. We moor and board all of our vessels with floating docks which we own and are ramped but actually isolated from the piers themselves. We deal with DNR issues and street end issues in the manner we arrange our floating docks and boats around these Piers.

In general, the idea of developing the waterfront as a more people friendly environment is attractive to the owners and management of Argosy. But we are not convinced of the benefit of large, plain, open spaces. Unless designed carefully and managed continuously there is a real danger of a drug and alcohol problem, pan handlers and criminal elements moving in. Political environments can change as does the emphasis on preventing this. It can have an instant and huge impact on our business and even today the waterfront businesses together hire additional security to supplement Seattle Police and DSA to walk our employees to cars and buses after hours and break up occasional altercations. A lot of the problems center on the Waterfront Park between Piers 57 and 59. Given a choice of being next to an open public space or a more congested area of shops, restaurants, and an aquarium we'd most likely prefer the latter.

Nearly as important as where we end up, is how and how long it takes to get there. The Viaduct/Seawall construction period will have an enormous impact on our business. How the work progresses up and down the waterfront will be critical for us. We are desperate to know what to expect and to begin planning for it. David Spiker's phased approach was the first example I've seen of a possible plan that could allow us to remain in business during construction, (maybe).

Argosy's largest concern for the post Viaduct waterfront is in the potential expansion of residential units on or near the water's edge. Seattle has a limited amount of waterfront suitable for commercial use. The encroachment of residential units either condos or high rise will eliminate the ability for most maritime businesses to operate. Industry, commercial, light commercial and even parks and roads can be changed back and forth as politics and the needs of a city life change. Once waterfront becomes residential however, it'll never change back. We need to be very careful regarding this. Because of this I feel it's essential that before we bury the Viaduct, which by itself will drastically change the character of the central waterfront, we need to look and decide on a long term land use plan for all of Seattle's waterfronts both fresh water and saltwater. This of course was beyond the scope of the Waterfront Collaborative but not necessarily the city's or Waterfront Partner's Group. Right now the Viaduct creates a noise zone, which even though nobody likes it, overwhelms anything Argosy and businesses like Argosy do late at night or early Sunday mornings. When the Viaduct comes down, we know we'll have to change some of the ways we do business, but we're hopeful that we can continue to do business here in front of downtown Seattle. It would be difficult for Argosy to do this across the street from residential units.

As I mentioned on Friday, I am more than willing to meet with, give a tour or talk about Argosy Cruises to anyone interested or involved in developing the new waterfront. We know that we have a lot to gain or lose in how the waterfront turns out.

Ralph Pease  
VP of Operations  
Argosy Cruises

*Additional comments were also sent by Meriwether Wilson:*

Hi Robert,

Thank you for such prompt and comprehensive minutes from the last waterfront meeting. I have passed them on to the rest of our Colman Flats Team.

As I trust you know by now, it was Jill Sterrett of EDAW who lead and spoke for the Pioneer Square Team. David Spiker was the lead on the 'Central Waterfront' section, just north of the present Ferry Area.



I also wanted to share an inspiration / observation from EDAW's talk about their 'eco pier' that I think was overlooked in the flurry of that wonderfully busy afternoon of presentations. EDAW'S creation of an 'evolved pier' to me presents an excellent example of how we can honor and mark historical milestones while at the same time responding to new needs and visions. The way EDAW's design kept the 'essence' of pier, yet also created an equally vital aspect of Seattle's 'authentic heritage' - the natural features of islands, wetlands, tidepools - to me elicits the kind of inspired approaches that we might consider for some of the other historical elements that need illuminating but also updating or changing.

I look forward to further work with your good team as dialogue on the waterfront continues and I solidly endorse the 'Waterfront Partner's process as an avenue for creative, constructive and transparent discussions towards implemented innovations.

Yours sincerely,

Meriwether Wilson